

on that great back bent above its endless task; and yet it was, too, something of a blinded giant. Style is not for a foreigner to judge, though to many *Madame Bovary* must seem in that as near perfection as humanity can come; and yet I have heard a countryman of his say that the style of Flaubert in general was better in his letters than in his books, because less laboured. It would be like life's irony if that were true. The double 'de' in 'une couronne de fleurs d'oranger' might cause him agonies; but it did not cause them to the ordinarily sensitive reader. 'He ought to have had to write articles against time', was the comment of Anatole France. He was, indeed, apt to become a little too like a sculptor, meticulously modelling every hair in the head of some statue designed to crown a column a hundred feet high, where only the birds would see them.

Flaubert had a great admiration for Montaigne. For a whole year, at eighteen, he says he read almost nothing else. 'Nous avons memes gouts, memes opinions, meme maniere de vivre, memes manies.' Could he really think so—he who overworked in order to avoid what Montaigne most loved doing—thinking of himself? Surely Montaigne would have considered him as mad as the pedant who kills himself to settle the metre of Plautus. For Flaubert rejected much more of life than Montaigne—not only all belief but also, in theory at least

(for he could
be heroically self-sacrificing in practice), all
duties; except, possibly, the duty of the artist to his
art. Women
he thought too trivial to love, Nature too
vast; even good
taste was perhaps a hindrance in some ways.
'Les plus
grands evenements de ma vie ont ete
quelques pensées,
des lectures, certains couchers de soleil a
Trouville, au
bord de la mer, et des causeries de cinq ou
dix heures
consecutives avec un ami qui est
maintenant marié et